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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [UK](#) [XF](#)  
SUBJECT: [TAKING ACTION AGAINST HEZBOLLAH AND HAMAS](#)

REF: A. LONDON 1011  
[1](#)B. SECRETARY 15

Classified By: Charge David Johnson. Reasons 1.4(B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: The Prime Minister's commitment to the Secretary to proscribe the political wings of Hezbollah and Hamas coupled with the March 1 London meeting to support the Palestinian leadership provide us with our best opportunity in three years to leverage significant change in HMG policy towards both organizations. There are two choke points along the road to this objective. The first is within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the second is the Home Office. We will continue to press the case in both places, but recommend that Washington officials use their exchanges with the British Embassy and meetings with senior HMG officials to remind them of the Prime Minister's commitment to proscribe and the importance we place on it. Getting over the hurdle may ultimately require the Secretary's intervention with Home Secretary Clarke. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (S) We have been following up the Prime Minister's February 4 commitment to Secretary Rice that HMG would proscribe (i.e., designate as a Foreign Terrorist Organization) the political wings of Hezbollah and Hamas (Ref B). According to the Foreign Office, there is pressure to proscribe before the UK-hosted "London Meeting on Strengthening the Palestinian Authority," which takes place on March 1 (Ref A). We met again today, February 11, with Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials from the Counter Terrorism Policy Directorate (CTPD) to discuss where matters stood.

[1](#)3. (S) CTPD officials told us Foreign Secretary Straw's letter to Home Secretary Clarke requesting proscription of both (Ref A) has not yet left the Foreign Office. (Note: The FCO can initiate a proscription, but the legal power to proscribe a terrorist organization rests with the Home Office. End Note.) The draft is sitting with the Arab-Israel Group in the FCO's Middle East and North Africa Directorate (MENAD), which is considering proscriptions' implications to the Middle East peace process. These "political considerations" will impact the final tone of Straw's letter to Clarke, according to CTPD. CTPD is pressing for Straw to take "a tough line" with Clarke.

[1](#)4. (S) Once Straw's request to proscribe the political wings of Hezbollah and Hamas arrives at the Home Office, CTPD officials say Clarke and his team may be reluctant to act on it. Bitten by a series of legal setbacks over counter terrorism policy, Clarke is apprehensive about employing any of his more "strident" counter terrorism powers, including proscription, CTPD told us. According to CTPD, No.10 is prepared to weigh in on the issue, but CTPD officials also recommended to us that U.S. officials weigh-in directly with Clarke as well once Straw's letter has arrived at the Home Office. UKNSA Shienwald has given the Charge the same signal. We will certainly do so. But depending on the state of play as March 1 approaches, it may be appropriate for the Secretary to telephone Clarke directly or meet with him

during her February 28-March 1 visit.

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Johnson